

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15
ICA-11 IO-13 OMB-01 EA-10 AID-05 /106 W
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R 120730Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1900
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ANKARA 3665

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PGOV, AF, PK, UR, CENTO
SUBJ: CENTO COUNCIL OF DEPUTIES REVIEW AFGHANISTAN SITUATION

REF: STATE 118510

1. SUMMARY: AT CENTO COUNCIL OF DEPUTIES MEETING MAY 10
SECRETARY GENERAL GURUN ASKED EACH DEPUTY TO SPEAK TO THE
SUBJECT OF THE RECENT CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN.
GENERAL THRUST OF STATEMENTS WAS THAT IT WAS TOO EARLY TO
FULLY EVALUATE THE IMPORTANCE OR EVEN THE PERMANENCE OF THE
NEW REGIME AND THAT THE NEW REGIME'S PROTESTATIONS OF NON-
ALIGNMENT SHOULD BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE UNTIL PROVED OTHERWISE.
THE SOLE EXCEPTION WAS TO THIS CONSENSUS WAS THE DEPUTY FROM
PAKISTAN, INTER ALIA, WHO NOTED THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR'S PUBLIC
STATEMENT IN ISLAMABAD THAT THE USSR WAS PREPARED TO ESTABLISH
THE CLOSEST OF FRIENDLY RELATIONS ONCE PAKISTAN QUIT SUCH ANT-
SOVIET PACTS AS CENTO. THE PAKISTAN DEPUTY CONCLUDED HIS GLOOMY
PRESENTATION BY SAYING "WE (PAKISTAN) MUST NOW DECIDE THE WAYS

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AND MEANS OF MEETING THE DIRECT THREAT FACING US". THE AMBASSADOR
USED THE GUIDANCE PROVIDED REFTEL IN HIS PRESENTATION. END
SUMMARY

2. AT SECRETARY GENERAL GURUN'S INITIATIVE, A COUNCIL OF
DEPUTIES MEETING WAS CALLED MAY 10 TO REVIEW THE SITUATION IN
AFHANISTAN. AMBASSADOR BATMANGLIDJ (IRAN) SPOKE FIRST STATING

THAT WHILE IT WAS USEFUL AND NECESSARY TO REVIEW THE AFGHANISTAN SITUATION, THE COUNCIL'S DELIBERATIONS MUST BE KEPT SECRET. (NOTE: GURUN TOOK THE HINT AND BACKED OFF HIS INITIAL IDEA OF CIRCULATING A DETAILED CENTO SECRETARIAT STUDY OF THE THREAT THE NEW REGIME IN AFGHANISTAN POSED TO THE REGION). STRESSING THAT HE WAS SPEAKING WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS, THE IRANIAN SAID THAT IT WAS PREMATURE TO EVALUATE THE ULTIMATE SIGNIFICANCE IN THE RECENT CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT IN AFGHANISTAN. SOVIET INFLUENCE HAS BEEN ENDEMIC IN AFGHANISTAN FOR SOME TIME. CLEARLY THE NEW GOVERNMENT IS MADE UP OF MEN ASSOCIATED WITH THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND MILITARY OFFICERS WHO RECEIVED THEIR TRAINING IN THE USSR. THE COUP APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN PLANNED IN ADVANCE BUT CARRIED OUT PREMATURELY. THE IRANIAN SAW NO EVIDENCE THAT THE SOVIETS PARTICIPATED IN THE COUP ALTHOUGH IT WOULD BE HEAD TO BELIEVE THAT THEY WERE NOT AWARE OF THE PLAN. WHILE THE NEW GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO BE COMMUNIST, THE IRANIAN REMINDED THE COUNCIL THAT AFGHANISTAN WAS A NATION OF DEEP ISLAMIC CONVICTIONS. MANY QUESTIONS, THEREFORE, REMAIN TO BE ANSWERED BEFORE WE CAN ACCURATELY GUAGE THE THREAT TO THE REGION. HOWEVER, THE TRADITIONAL SOVIET DESIRE TO ACQUIRE ACCESS TO WARM WATERS (THE PERSIAN GULF AND THE INDIAN OCEAN) AND SUPPLIES OF ENERGY COULD NOT BE IGNORED.

3. AMBASSADOR SHAIKH (PAKISTAN) AGREED THAT A CLEAR PICTURE OF THE AFGHANISTAN SITUATION HAD NOT EMERGED. HOWEVER, HE REMINDED THE COUNCIL OF AGHA SHAHI'S PRESENTATION AT THE LONDON SECRET

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MINISTERIAL WHEN THE FOREIGN ADVISOR NOTED INCREASING SOVIET INFLUENCE IN AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN'S DESIRE TO REMAIN FREE OF SOVIET INFLUENCE AND HIS COUNTRY'S POSITION AS A BUFFER TO THE ADVANCE OF SOVIET POWER TO THE SOUTH. PAKISTAN, HE SAID, NOW HAS A CONTIGUOUS BORDER WITH A SOVIET SATELLITE STATE AND PAKISTAN'S WORST FEARS HAVE BEEN REALIZED. THERE IS "NO DOUBT" THAT THE NEW REGIME IS COMMUNIST, HOWEVER PAKISTAN WILL TAKE AT FACE VALUE AFGHANISTAN'S PROTESTATIONS OF NON-ALIGNMENT UNTIL PROVED OTHERWISE. NEVERTHELESS, THE COUP IN AFGHANISTAN HAS "COMPLETELY CHANGED THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE REGION". THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR IN ISLAMABAD WAS INTERVIEWED BY THE PRESS FOLLOWING THE COUP AND WAS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE USSR WAS PREPARED TO HAVE THE CLOSEST FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH PAKISTAN ONCE THAT COUNTRY QUITE SUCH ANTI-SOVIET PACTS AS CENTO. "WE (PAKISTAN) MUST NOW DECIDE THE WAYS AND MEANS OF MEETING THE DIRECT THREAT FACING US."

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4. AMBASSADOR SUBASI (TURKEY) NOTED THAT THE SWIFTNESS OF THE COUP GAVE EVIDENCE OF PRIOR PLANNING. THE NEW REGIME, HE SAID, HAS PROCLAIMED ITSELF TO BE NON-ALIGNED AND RESPECTFUL OF THE PRINCIPLES OF ISLAM. THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER, LEAVES SOME DOUBT AS TO THE TRUTH OF THESE PRONOUNCEMENTS. THERE IS NO DISPUTE ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESENT CONTROL OVER THE COUNTRY BUT HOW LONG IT WILL MAINTAIN THIS CONTROL REMAINS A QUESTION. THERE ARE ALREADY INDICATIONS THAT SOME OFFICERS IN THE AFGHAN ARMY ARE HAVING SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THE COUP AND THERE MAY BE OTHER IF SOVIET DOMINATION BECOMES EVIDENT." A PRO-SOVIET AFGHANISTAN WOULD BE A MAJOR CHANGE IN THE REGION." THE TURKISH DEPUTY RECOMMENDED THAT THE MEMBER GOVERNMENTS WORK TO ESTABLISH GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE NEW REGIME WHILE WATCHING DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY. WE SHOULD, HE SAID, FOCUS ON AFGHANISTAN'S FOREIGN RATHER THAN DOMESTIC POLICY AS THE MEASURE OF THE NEW REGIME'S INTENTIONS. "IF WE TRY TO ISOLATE AFGHANISTAN, THE DRIFT TO THE SOVIETS WILL BE FASTER."

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5. AMBASSADOR DODS (U.K.) SAID HE HAD NOTHING TO ADD TO THAT WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN SAID. HE NOTED ONLY THAT THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT WAS MADE UP OF 21 KNOWN "LEFTISTS" AND 12 "FORMER COMMUNIST MEMBERS".

THE NEW REGIME HAD ANNOUNCED THAT ITS FOREIGN POLICY WOULD BE BASED ON NON-ALIGNMENT AND ITS INTERNAL POLICY WOULD BE CONSISTENT WITH ISLAM. LAND REFORM HAD BEEN MENTIONED AS A PROIROTY PROJECT FOR THE NEW GOVERNMENT AND NOTHING HAD BEEN SAID ON "BORDER ISSUES". FOR WHAT IT WAS WORTH, THE NEW AFGHAN CABINET WAS MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ETHNIC DIVERSITY WITHIN THE COUNTRY. THE REGIME HAD REQUESTED THAT ALL U.S. ACTIVITIES IN AFGHANISTAN CONTINUE BUT THAT RELATIONS WITH ALL NATIONS WOULD BE BASED ON RECIPROCITY (READ AID). THE U.K. WOULD BE WATCHING WHAT THE REGIME DOES AND NOT WHAT IT SAYS. WITH RESPECT TO SOVIET INFLUENCE, THE U.K. DEPUTY SAID THAT THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE OF SOVIET PARTICIPATION IN THE COUP. HE ALSO REMINDED THE COUNCIL THAT WHILE THE SOVIETS PROVIDE ONE QUARTER OF THE FUNDS FOR THE AFGHANISTAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN, THE IRANIANS PROVIDE ONE HALF.

6. THE COUNCIL AGREED TO PERIODICALLY REVIEW THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN. THE NEXT COUNCIL OF DEPUTIES MEETING WILL BE JUNE 5.

7. COMMENT: ALL DEPUTIES SEEMED TO BE CONCERNED THAT NO ACTIONS BE TAKEN THAT MIGHT LIMIT WHAT OPPORTUNITIES THERE ARE FOR WORKING WITH THE NEW AFGHAN REGIME. ALTHOUGH THE IRANIAN SAID THAT HE WAS SPEAKING WITHOUT INSTRUCTIONS, HE CLEARLY ALLOWED THE PAKISTANI TO TAKE THE LEAD IN PAINTING THE DARKER SIDE OF THE PICTURE. SPIERS

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